

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1917

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY

CINCPACFLT PRIORITY

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 3254

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MNUC, ELAB, ASEC, NZ, US

SUBJECT: U.S.S. TRUXTUN VISIT PRECIPITATES LABOR CONFRONTATION

1. SUMMARY: VOWING THAT WELLINGTON UNIONS WILL NOT DICTATE TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ON MATTERS OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY, CABINET OFFICIALS WORKED THROUGH THE WEEKEND TRYING TO PERSUADE WATERSIDERS TO RESUME CRITICAL FERRY SERVICE BETWEEN NEW ZEALAND'S NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS. STRIKE PRECIPITATED BY WELLINGTON WATER-FRONT UNIONS' DECISION TO BOYCOTT ALL SHIPPING IN WELLINGTON PORT FOLLOWING ARRIVAL NPW U.S.S. TRUXTUN. DEMONSTRATIONS IN WELLINGTON AND ELSEWHERE IN NEW ZEALAND OPPOSING NPW VISIT, WITH EXCEPTION OF COMMUNICATION ANTENNAE DESTROYED IN CHRISTCHURCH, HAVE BEEN SMALL AND PEACEFUL. GOVERNMENT APPEARS INTENT TO REWRITE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT TO PROVIDE FOR PENALTIES AGAINST UNIONS ENGAGING IN PURELY POLITICAL STRICKES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DECISION OF WELLINGTON WATERSIDE UNIONS TO "BLACK-BAN" ALL SHIPPING AND RELATED ACTIVITY IN WELLINGTON PORT IN PROTEST OF THE VISIT OF AMERICAN  
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NPW U.S.S. TRUXTUN HAS RESULTED IN SERIOUS LABOR CRISIS

AND EXTENSIVE TIE-UP OF CRITICAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS. COOK STRAIT FERRIES HAVE NOT SAILED SINCE EVENING OF AUGUST 26 RESULTING IN BACK UP OF THOUSANDS OF TONS OF FREIGHT, AS WELL AS SEVERAL THOUSAND STRANDED PASSENGERS AND THEIR VEHICLES. ADDITIONAL WATERFRONT RELATED ENTERPRISES, SUCH AS CEMENT STORAGE SILOS, HAVE CEASED OPERATION CREATING SHORTAGE OF BUILDING MATERIALS. WATERSIDERS VOW THEY WILL NOT MAN SHIPS OR PERMIT WHARF WORK AS LONG AS TRUXTUN REMAINS IN PORT.

3. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS OVER THE WEEKEND HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT RESUMPTION OF AT LEAST THE INTER-ISLAND FERRY SERVICE WHICH WOULD ENABLE THOUSANDS OF SCHOOL HOLIDAY FAMILIES AND THEIR VEHICLES TO RETURN HOME. MINISTERS OF LABOUR AND JUSTICE AND ACTING MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION MET WITH WATERSIDE UNIONS LEADERSHIP AND SECRETARY OF FEDERATION OF LABOUR THROUGHOUT SATURDAY AND SUNDAY IN EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. CABINET MET TODAY TO CONSIDER SEVERAL OPTIONS PRESENTED BY MINISTER OF LABOUR, RANGING FROM DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY THROUGH USE OF AIRLIFT OF CARS AND ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES, TO POSSIBLE REWRITE OF ENTIRE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT.

4. MINISTER OF LABOUR GORDON TELEPHONED EMBASSY LABOR ATTACHE EARLY THIS A.M. NOTING THAT HE WAS PREPARING OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET LATER IN MORNING. GORDON INQUIRED IN VAGUE TERMS ABOUT QUOTE A RECENT U.S. COURT DECISION INVOLVING UNITED MINE WORKERS IN WHICH A FEDERAL JUDGE PUT LIEN AGAINST WAGES OF INDIVIDUAL UMW MEMBERS OF NON-PAYMENT OF FINES AGAINST THE UNION. UNQUOTE. INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO LABOR ATTACHE IN WELLINGTON AND THAT PROVIDED BY TOM BOWIE (S/IL) IN TELEPHONE CALL TO HIM AT HOME INDICATED TWO POSSIBLE CASES: (A) HEAVY FINES ORDER BY JUDGE K.K. HALL IN 1975 WEST VIRGINIA WILDCAT STRIKES AND (B) DISTRICT 20 UMW PICKETING OF SHIP OFF LOADING COAL FROM SOUTH AFRICA. AS FAR AS LABOR ATTACHE ABLE TO DETERMINE, INDIVIDUAL MEMBER FINES NEVER PAID IN EITHER INSTANCE

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AND MINISTER OF LABOUR WAS SO INFORMED. SUBSEQUENT COVERSATON WITH ASSISTANT TO MINISTER OF LABOUR INDICATED THAT NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CASTING ABOUT FOR APPROPRIATE PENALTY CLAUSES FOR REWRITE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT. GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE CONFRONTATION, IF THERE HAD TO BE ONE, OVER THE WAGE FREEZE ISSUE RATHER THAN NPWS. BUT AS FAR AS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CONCERNED, HE SAID, "EITHER ISSUE IS

A WINNER." FOLLOWING CABINET SESSION, PRIME MINISTER MULDOON TOLD PRESS THAT MORE NPWS WOULD BE VISITING NEW ZEALAND AND UNIONS HAD BETTER START GETTING USED TO IT. NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, "IS NOT GOING TO TAKE A SOFT LINE," BUT WILL MAKE CLEAR THAT NEW ZEALAND "IS BEING GOVERNED FROM PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, NOT FROM TRADE HALL."

5. PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST NPW VISIT HAVE BEEN SMALL, PEACEFUL AND, PREDICTABLY, HAVE RECEIVED MEDIA ATTENTION FAR BEYOND THAT MERITED BY THEIR NUMBERS. DEMONSTRATORS IN WELLINGTON MOSTLY YOUTHFUL AND BEAR PLACARDS WHOSE REVERSE SIDES CARRY SHOPWORN SLOGANS OF YESTERDAY'S CAUSES. ELSEWHERE IN NEW ZEALAND, TRUXTUN'S VISIT HAS BEEN MARKED BY PRAYER VIGILS, HUNGER STRIKES, BRIEF SIT-IN AT AUCKLAND CONGEN AND SCATTERED SMALL GROUPS OF MARCHING PROTESTORS. THE SINGLE EXCEPTION TO THE NON-VIOLENT TONE WAS THE FELLING OF ANTARCTICA COMMUNICATIONS ANTENNA AT CHRISTCHURCH.

6. COMMENT: WATERFRONT STRIKES, INCLUDING STOPPAGE OF THE INTER-ISLAND FERRY SERVICE, ARE NOTHING NEW TO NEW ZEALAND. THE DIFFERENCE THIS TIME IS THAT THE STOPPAGE IS AIMED NOT AT ECONOMIC ISSUES BUT AT THE DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT. THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF SCHOOL HOLIDAY TRAVELERS ARE BEARING THE PRIMARY HARDSHIPS OF THE STOPPAGE SIMPLY MEANS THAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN PROBABLY COUNT ON SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE MAJORITY OF NEW ZEALANDERS IN WHATEVER ACTIONS IT DECIDES ARE APPROPRIATE AGAINST THE WATERSIDERS. LABOUR MINISTER GORDON'S EXPLANATION THAT THE FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS MUST BE "THOSE OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, NOT OF WELLINGTON BRANCH UNIONS OR A GROUP OF UNIONS

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ON THE WELLINGTON WHARF" CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE WELL-RECEIVED BY MOST NEW ZEALANDERS. SO FAR WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGN THAT THE COINCIDENCE OF THE TRUXTUN VISIT AND THE LABOR CONFRONTATION WHICH IT PRECIPITATED HAS RESULTED IN ANY ANTI-AMERICAN BACKLASH.

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